

# Federal Way education leaders applaud state Supreme Court's contempt ruling



Federal Way Public Schools officials applaud the Washington State Supreme Court's decision to hold the state in contempt for failing to take adequate steps to fully fund education by 2018.

— image credit: Courtesy Federal Way Public Schools

by GREG ALLMAIN, Federal Way Mirror reporter  
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The Washington State Supreme Court has declared the state in contempt of court for failing to take adequate steps to fully fund education by 2018.

At the moment, the Supreme Court indicated that “the question remains whether sanctions are immediately warranted,” because the “state has assured the court that education funding is the Legislature’s top priority and that the Legislature is determined to (and the state expects it to) take meaningful action in the 2015 budget session.”

If that’s not met by the end of the 2015 legislative session, however, the state Supreme Court warned that “the court will reconvene and impose sanctions or other remedial measures.”

Although the court's contempt ruling is currently something of a symbolic action, education leaders at all levels across the state said they were pleased the court made the move.

"The court got it right," said Federal Way Public Schools interim Superintendent Sally McLean. "Our state legislators must uphold the constitutional mandate to make sure all our students can attend adequately funded schools. We urge legislators to find dependable funding to comply with the McCleary decision. We look forward to working with them and the governor to make this happen."

State Superintendent Randy Dorn said he was "pleased" with the court's contempt ruling.

"It should come as no surprise: Very simply, contempt means that the state has refused to comply with a direct order of the court. In January 2014, the court told the state to produce a plan to achieve full funding. The state failed to do that," Dorn said in a press release from his office. "I think it's clear, however, that contempt means something more. The state is continuing to violate our constitution."

Dorn noted that Article IX, Section 1 of the state constitution "states clearly that an ample provision for the education of all students is the state's 'paramount duty.'"

"Thirty years ago, the court ruled that the state wasn't meeting that requirement. And the court reaffirmed that two years ago in the McCleary decision," Dorn added.

The state's superintendent said he agreed with the court that the Legislature deserves the 2015 legislative session to attempt to meet the requirements of McCleary and the state constitution.

"The state needs to get to work. It needs to make significant gains in funding to meet the 2018 deadline. I hope that happens," Dorn concluded.

To read the court's contempt ruling, visit [www.courts.wa.gov/appellate\\_trial\\_courts/SupremeCourt/](http://www.courts.wa.gov/appellate_trial_courts/SupremeCourt/). For more information from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, visit [www.k12.wa.us/](http://www.k12.wa.us/).

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